

1925

The green bench

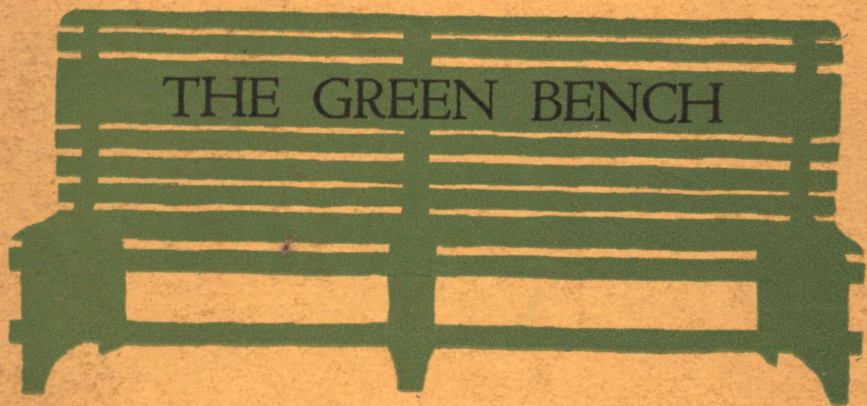
Peggy O'Day

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ST. PETERSBURG, FLA.

"WHERE THE SUN SHINES EVERY DAY"

Pamphlet

Special Collections

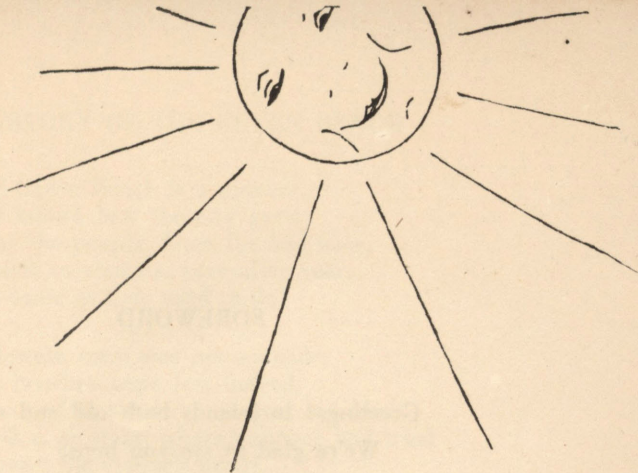
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THE GREEN BENCH

BY

PEGGY O'DAY



Boost for today, leave cares for tomorrow,
Forget the grouch and drop the sorrow;
Wear the Sunshine City smile,
And we'll have a good time all the while!

FOREWORD

Greetings! to friends both old and new,
We're glad to see you here;
We hope you'll have a real good time
And want to stay all year!

Forget the cold you've left behind,
Forget your worries, too;
Enjoy the sunshine all you can,
There's lots of things to do!

Go fish for tarpon in the Gulf,
For mackerel in the bay;
Play golf, or tennis, roque, pitch quoits,
Play what you please—but *play!*

This city bids you welcome,
Our best is your's to command;
Enjoy each day, and carry away
In your shoes some Florida sand!

THE HISTORY OF THE GREEN BENCH

The old Green Bench is a pioneer,
And knows how the city grew;
And why the people, from far and near,
Come back to visit us, year after year,
The same as they used to do!

The sidewalk once was not so wide,
The benches were few indeed,
And grouped in shady spots, just outside
Some office, or store, where someone had tried
To meet the visitor's need!

The paint on the bench wasn't always new,
And bright, as it is today,
But then, as now, 'twas a friend to you,
A comfort to everyone all year thru,
With a prominent part to play!

Altho' the city has changed a lot,
And so, perhaps, have we,
The friendly Green Bench changes not;
And surely, nobody ever forgot,
Its hospitality!

In all the parks along the street,
Wherever there's need and space,
The young and old may find a seat,
And every state in the Union meet,
The Bench is a trysting-place!

The merchant, the banker, the farmer-folk,
The doctor, the preacher, and all,
Sit there together and tell a joke,
And nobody asks if you're rich or broke—
They welcome you, great and small!

We all come back to it, every year,
The same as we've always done;
And tho' there's a thousand attractions here,
Without the friendly old Bench, I fear,
We'd all miss a lot of fun!

Perhaps you may find other cities as fair,
But no matter where you go,
I'm sure there isn't one thing to compare
With Green Bench friendliness, anywhere;
There's nothing quite like it, you know!

So make up your mind, before you go,
To come again next fall;
Escape the dreary days, ice and snow,
Come back, where the flowers bloom and oranges grow,
The Green Bench will welcome you all!

IN FLORIDA

A summer-land, where the skies are blue,
Where flowers bloom, and the birds sing, too,
All thru the day and the moonlit night,
Truly a land of heart's delight—
Is Florida!

Sparkling waters of Gulf and bay,
Wonderful beaches and places to play
For those who motor, or golf, or fish,
There's everything that the sportsmen wish—
In Florida!

Tropical scenery, quiet nooks
For beauty-lovers; with flower-lined brooks,
And golden days: all pleasures are found
In easy reach the whole year round—
In Florida!

The friendliest place on the whole green earth,
Truly a land of sunshine and mirth,
Where folks are healthy, happy, and kind;
The good things of life are easy to find—
In Florida!

THE GREEN BENCH

If this old bench could speak to me,
I'm sure that it would say,
"I know a million secrets,
"And hear new ones every day!"

The lovers sit here holding hands,
I hear "him" softly coo:
"Suppose we just get married, dear,
I'm quite in love with you!"

She smiles at him, she's very shy,
He swears he will be true;
(She wouldn't tell her age, but I
Am sure he's eighty, too!)

A Mr. Grouch sits here awhile,
Declares the sun too warm;
He really didn't mean to smile,
He'd rather growl and storm!

But sunshine seeps right thru his skin,
To warm his heart, you know;
Then pretty soon you see him grin,
And stop his tale of woe!

He's found a friend who tells a joke
He'd never heard before;
Next thing you know they're playing roque,
(He's Mr. Grouch no more!)

(The old Green Bench *will* speak to me,
More funny stories tell,
And now *I* pass them on to you,
So *you* will smile, as well!)

OUR SUNSHINE CITY

Have you ever met the fellow
Who's forgotten how to smile?
Who never has the time to stop
And chat with you awhile?
Who cannot sing or whistle?
(If you have, it is a pity)
But I am *sure* he isn't in
The Sunshine City!

And have you found a person
Who does not enjoy the park?
Who doesn't like our birds
Because they sing from dawn to dark?
And who has not enjoyed our fruit
And flowers? Well, it's a pity,
If anyone like that is in
The Sunshine City!

Or have you known a woman, man,
Or any girl or boy,
Who couldn't find a single thing
They liked, or could enjoy—
And wished they hadn't come at all?
Oh, that would be a pity!
But such a thing can't happen in
The Sunshine City!

For folks who haven't smiled for years,
Soon learn to wear a grin;
And everyone who visits us,
Will surely come again.
The old grow young, and spry, and gay;
The solemn ones grow witty,
And everyone is happy in
The Sunshine City!

You can't forget the sunny days
You spent on Tampa Bay;
You can't forget the friendly bench
And games you liked to play!
And don't forget the one request,
With which I end this ditty:
Come back, and bring your friends to share
Our Sunshine City!

THE FRIENDLY BENCH.

The good green bench stands on the street,
Inviting weary folks to rest;
A most convenient place to meet
Your friends, from north, east, south, and west.

A lot of funny things it hears,
(Its sense of humor is quite keen)
The love affairs, scraps, hopes and fears,
Of ninety-five and sweet sixteen!

One day a man in mournful tones
Said, "Well, I've lost my health you see,"
And "Nothing seems the same," he moans,
"There's little left in life for me!"

The green bench only smiled a bit
And thought, "My friend we'll wait and see!"
"Sunshine and play will make you fit,
"And young, tho' you are eighty-three."

And now he's fine, his smile is wide,
He acts as tho' he owns the earth;
(Beside him a prospective bride,
Is finding out how much he's worth!)

He speaks of money salted down
In bonds, broad acres of fine land,
A lovely home he's bought in town;
And then!—she lets him hold her hand.

The good green bench is also wise,
So *you* must guess the story's end;
It does not blame or criticize,
For it's an "all-wool, yard-wide" friend!

SHOWER AND SUNSHINE

It rained, the Green Bench stood alone;
The folks all scowled and hurried by,
Or spoke of it in scornful tone,
And all because it wasn't dry.
The rain cloud rolled itself about
And soon the sun came peeping out.

Quite dry, the bench looked clean and new,
A lady stopped to rest a while
And watch the games and wonder who
That man was with the pleasant smile;
He seemed so gay, so full of life,
She wondered if he had a wife!

Now this same man had seen her, too,
Admired the color of her hair,
And wondered if her eyes were blue;
Next thing, the Green Bench held a pair.
Love at first sight? Well I should say!
(The Green Bench sees that every day).

They sat and cooed, the hours flew by;
Could they resist Dan Cupid's spell?
I'm sure they didn't even try,
But that's one thing the bench won't tell.
However, sure as anything,
Next week she wore a wedding ring!

Quick work? Well, yes, it was, my friend,
But that's the way we do things here;
When folks, with broken hearts to mend,
Come to St. Pete from far and near,
With broken health and courage, too,
The Green Bench always sees them through.

It hears us grumble when it rains
And growl because the wind blows cool,
Complain about our aches and pains,
And wonder why we played the fool.
Though we may scorn it when its wet,
The bench is our good friend, you bet!

It knows that sunshine, play and fun,
The happy hours spent in the park,
Hikes to the pier to see the sun
Come up, good times from dawn 'til dark,
And friendly spirit of St. Pete,
Will cure all ills—it can't be beat!

HAVE YOU?

Have you ever stopped to ponder, as you wander 'round the town,
About the many kinds of folk you meet?
And do you really see them, as you're walking up and down,
And, with a smile, how many do you greet?

A lot of folks are lonely, and if only you will smile
And speak a friendly word, when e'er you can,
You'll find your own heart lighter, sunshine brighter all the while,
And truly prove yourself a friend to man!

In such a friendly city, it's a pity some folks frown;
There are so many things to make them glad!
We all should drop care overboard, and let our troubles drown
In sunshine, and forget how to be sad!

FISHIN'

Lots of sassy sheepshead,
Swimmin' 'round the pier,
Redfish, trout and snappers, too,
All of them are here;
Grab your trusty fish pole,
Rig it up just right,
Get your bait and hurry down
Soon as it is light!

Think about balloon fish
Frying in the pan!
Did you feel one nibble then?
Catch him if you can;
Didn't catch him that time?
You may get him yet,
Or you'll hook a bigger one,
Very soon, I'll bet!

There—the cork goes under!
See the old pole bend;
Gee, you've got a whale, I think,
Hold him, hold him, friend!
Surely is exciting,
You, who sit and wish;
Get a pole and come along,
Lots of fun to fish!

Life's a funny proposition—we should smile,
Make the world a little brighter for a while;
Anyone can growl and kick, better grin than fling a brick,
Sunshine chases shadows quick—*Why Not Smile?*

PETERSBURG FRIENDLINESS

Good morning! Ain't this sunshine fine?
Now I call this real weather!
Just cool enough, the air's like wine;
Suppose we walk together!

I like to go down on the pier
To see who's out there fishing;
I find old friends, from far and near,
A-holding poles, and wishin'!

You say you came from Delaware?
Well, I'm from Indiany;
You find folks here from everywhere,
My wife came from Montany.

I met her first in Williams Park,
When both of us were lonely;
At first 'twas just a little lark,
Now, she's my "one and only!"

My son thought I'd gone crazy sure,
And all of her folks wondered
Just how much time 'twould take to cure
Two love-sick fools, who'd blundered!

But we're as happy as two cats,
And they don't need to worry;
We've only had a few small spats,
And made up in a hurry!

We're both so glad we came down here,
We like our weather sunny;
We aim to come again next year,
If we can find the money!

Well, now, I'm just real glad we met,
And next time we go walkin',
I promise you, I'll not forget,
To let *you* do the talking!

DREAMS COME TRUE

John met Jane in the park one day,
 (The Green Bench told me this,)
She gave him a smile in the sweetest way,
 And a little bit later a kiss!
Now don't be shocked or alarmed, dear friends,
 It wasn't as bad as it seems,
For this was the natural way to end
 Some wonderful childhood dreams!

When Jane wore a bonnet and gingham dress,
 And John was a barefoot boy,
Their school-day troubles they shared, I guess,
 As well as each treasure and joy!
They planned a future of rosy bliss,
 (The same as you, friend, and I,)
But dreams were lost; and the sweet little miss
 Grew up, as the years went by!

The barefoot boy had gone away,
 For life decreed they should part;
But always, (the Green Bench heard him say,)
 He'd guarded her place in his heart!
When they met again after many years,
 'Neath the palm tree's friendly shade,
They lost their troubles, their cares, and fears,
 In the love of a man for a maid!

Tho' he'd grown stout and her hair was gray,
 They felt youth stir in their hearts;
They turned Time back, from September to May,
 And vowed they would take a new start!
They'd build in the Sunshine City a home,
 (For here's where their dreams came true!)
'Twould be next to Heaven, so why should they roam,
 From a love-nest, built just for two?

The man in the moon smiled down on the pair,
 (And you might have seen him wink!)
To her, he looked handsome—to him, she was fair—
 Moonshine? Yes (but not what you think!)
For moonlight and sunshine on Tampa Bay,
 The Green Bench, the palm tree and pine,
All help to make happy, and youthful, and gay,
 Our tired hearts, (yours, friend, and mine)!

SMILES

Hello, friends! How's your smile;
Is it working all the while?
Being cheerful helps a pile,
Grin a little—that's the style!

Sunshine's on us every day,
Life grows sweeter every way,
Fishin's good in Gulf and bay,
Drop your grouch—come out and play!

Play at checkers, chess or roque,
Slam the slippers, tell a joke,
Smile! Forget it if you're broke,
Cares will float away, like smoke!

Just forget 'em, and they'll go,
No one likes a tale of woe.
Worry spoils your face, you know;
Put your smile on—don't be slow!

Hustle up and fall in line,
Folks are friendly, weather's fine;
Lots of pleasure and sunshine,
For you and your's and me and mine!

Get the spirit of St. Pete,
Make your visit here complete;
Every day brings some new treat,
Sunshine City can't be beat!

FISHERMAN'S JOY

The sun peeps up over Tampa Bay,
And what does he see, O friend?
A fisherman, trudging along the pier,
Straight to the very end!
But why does he come, ere the dawn of day?
His secret I'll whisper to you—
(To watch the stars in a purple sky,
Fade out, as it turns to blue)!

His ear, attuned to the sea-gull's cry,
His soul, a-thrill with joy
At being the first to greet the dawn;
(For he carries the heart of a boy!)
The glory of sunrise fills the sky,
The breeze sweeps in, to the land,
And blue waves sparkle and dance in the sun,
As they race to the snow-white sand!

And the fisherman's cares of yesterday,
Fade out with the purple sky;
The cares of tomorrow all steal away,
(And he doesn't "*care*" how, or why!)
His baited hook he flings far out,
And hauls in the fish, ere long;
His basket is filled with the finny tribe,
And his heart is filled with a song!

The world sees only a fisherman,
Generous, genial, and kind;
(But the *real* man, filled with the love of God,
Only a few may find.)
And why does he come at the dawn of day?
Food for the body—? 'Tis true;
But the beauty of dawn, he hides in his heart,
Is food for the man's soul, too!

DAN CUPID

Dan Cupid wandered 'round the town,
Looking for lonely hearts;
Found the Green Bench and settled down
To count his shining darts;
"I'll rest a bit and wait," said he,
"Someone will soon be needing me!"

His little bow looked rather old,
He'd used it many a year,
And almost worn it out, I'm told,
On gay old bachelors here.
"I'll find them all wives yet, you'll see,"
Said Cupid; "They shall not go free!"

Quite soon a most attractive girl,
Came strolling idly by,
Sat down, pushed back a wayward curl,
And Cupid heard her sigh:
"I'm just a little lonely here,
"I almost have the blues—Oh, dear!"

And then the band began to play,
A sentimental air;
A handsome man who passed that way,
Sat down beside her there;
She smiled at him, and he smiled too,
As lonely people often do!

He thought she had the sweetest face,
She liked his fine dark eyes;
Their friendship grew at such a pace,

It filled them with surprise;
(Sly Cupid's dart had gone straight thru,
And given each a heartache, too!)

The crusty bachelor thought, "I know,
"That single life is bliss,
"But just the same I'd like to go
"Thru life with one like this.
(“I'll just sit here awhile, and see,
"If she is interested in me!”)

She thought, "I'd hate to settle down,
"To cook for any man,
"And maybe live in some small town;
"I've quite a different plan.
(“But just the same, I think he's nice,
"I've caught him looking at me twice!”)

They talked a lot and neither knew,
How many hours had passed;
Said he, "I'm lonely; please, say you
"Don't think that I'm too fast.
"Give me your heart, you've stolen mine,
"Please say you'll be my Valentine!”

Dan Cupid chuckled as he said,
"There's one more off my list;
"But there's so many still unwed,
"That he will not be missed.
"But some day they'll all stand in line,
"And each receive his Valentine!”

CHILD'S PLAY

A Green Bench on the waterfront,
Told about a funny stunt;
It saw two white-haired men one day
Join the children in their play.
They tried the see-saw, giant swing,
The sliding board, 'n everything,
It surely was a sight to see,
And all the children laughed in glee,
At those two funny fat old men,
Pretending they were kids again!

They had an awful lot of fun,
It seemed a shame that anyone,
Should spoil their party, but it's true,
A big policeman passing thru,
Stopped to watch this funny pair,
And nabbed those two old men right there!
He said, "You'd better come with me,
"To find out what your fine will be,
"And you don't need to think its strange,
"If you're relieved of all your change!"

They pleaded "Guilty!" and were fined,
Five dollars, but they didn't mind!
You see they'd had a big long drink
Out of the Fount of Youth; I think,
'Twas that which made them feel so gay.
(That's how folks stay young here, they say.)
Drunk on spring water and sunshine
They fell from grace, but paid their fine!
And added to it cash enough,
To buy a lot more play-ground stuff!

The Green Bench said, "I wonder why,
"The folks with lots of cash don't buy
"More things for play-grounds; yes indeed,
"They should remember that kids need
"A lot of room, a chance to play,
"And learn good games as well as they;
"Those two men had the right 'idee'
"They tried it out themselves, to see
"Just how it feels to be a kid,
"And I am just real glad they did!"

ENTHUSIASM

St. Petersburg's 'the place where everybody loves to go,
And there are lots of reasons for it, too;
They make you feel so welcome, and they surely aren't slow
At planning things, for folks to see and do.

There's every kind of game that anybody wants to play,
There's something to amuse you all the while;
The *Royal Scotch Highlanders* give us music, every day,
And someone always greets you with a smile!

It's fun to see the trains come in, and watch the folks pile out,
You'd think there was a big re-union sure!
"Why, hello, Bill! how are you? When did you get here?" they'll shout.
(For loneliness, St. Petersburg's the cure)!

The "Get Acquainted" Club will see that each one finds a friend
And gets a proper introduction, too;
There's dancing, and card-parties, and church socials without end,
And fish to catch of some kind all year thru'.

There's picture-shows, and concerts, and there's lectures by the score;
There's parks and lakes, where swans and lilies float
With beauty on the water, bathing-beauties on the shore,
You'll feast your eyes on land or in boat!

Down on the pier someone is sure to say, "The fishin's fine!"
Uptown you'll hear the golf-course is a treat,
And everyone has heard about the Pullman car "*Sunshine*,"
For (stepping lively these folks can't be beat!)

We're all enthusiastic over Petersburg, you bet,
We have a good time here the whole year thru';
Folks used to want to stay 'till June, but now, don't you forget,
They want to call it "home" like me and you!

FLORIDA

Oh, Florida! I see thee lie

In peaceful beauty 'neath an azure sky,
Basking in sunshine kissed by the warm-lipped breeze,
Soothed by the mock bird's song and whispering leaves.

Who wouldn't wish to spend long golden hours

Within thy borders 'mongst the fruit and flowers?
How wonderful to see the red sun rise

Across a sparkling bay and hear the cries
Of graceful sea birds skimming o'er the blue,
Or looking shoreward, see the rosy hue
Of early morn spread swiftly o'er the land,

Tropical loveliness on every hand.
Sweet land of flowers, within thy heart there lies

The secret of a charm that never dies,
A bubbling spring; where Ponce de Leon
Renewed his youth, we may renew our own!

Oh, Florida! dear land of happy dreams,

Pink dawns and sunset splendor, winding streams,
Blue lakes and moonlight; on thy wave-washed shore
Romance has lived a thousand years and more!

EVENING

There's scraggly pine and waving palm
 Against a gorgeous sky;
A mock-bird's song breaths through the calm,
 (He's guarding a nest near by.)
The waves a-flame with the sunset gold,
 Wash gleaming sands at my feet,
And softly the shadows of night enfold,
 A beauty and peace complete.

Today is the day we should wear a smile,
 Forget our cares and be gay;
Smooth out our frowns, be cheerful awhile,
 And put all our worries away!
The world doesn't care if your luck is bad,
 And you can't improve it by looking sad;
If you've always given the best you had,
 The best will come back, some day!

Shed your coat, and step right in,
Play your best and play to win!
Look for favors? No, not we,
Independent as can be!
If, perchance, you loose the game,
Be good-natured, just the same;
Smile and say, "Well done, we'll play
Again; I'll beat you yet, some day!"

GRIEVIN' OVER LEAVIN'

It's almost time to pack the trunk, and travel North again,
But I am not enthused about it much;
For I've enjoyed the best time here, I've had in Lord knows when,
And thoughts of leavin' hurt to beat the Dutch!
I've done a lot o' fishin', and you bet I caught some fish,
(I had my picture taken with 'em, too,)
I aim to take it home for proof, and make those fellows wish,
That they had come down here like me and you!

I've played some roque and checkers, and I've tried my hand at chess,
I've even learned to dance a little bit;
But where I shine the most is 'round the horseshoe lanes, I guess,
And in the open forum, I'm a hit!
I've had some fun a-hanging 'round the benches on the street,
I've gone to church and played around the park;
I've watched the tournaments, and told the champions how to beat,
O, I've been on the jump from dawn to dark!

There's just so plagued many things to see, and hear, and do,
I've hardly had the time to eat and sleep;
And now it's nearly leavin' time, and I ain't half-way through.
Now ain't that just enough to make you weep?
But when "*she*" says, "Now, Dave, we must!" I guess it's time to go;
Our children will be looking for us soon,
But our old shoes are full of sand, and we'll come back, I know,
And next year we'll arrange to stay 'till June!

We'll do the advertising stunt for St. Petersburg, you bet,
And make our friends and neighbors want to come;
I like this "bring a friend" idee, and now don't *you* forget
To bring your folks, and we'll just make things hum!
We surely have had one good time, and hate like everything
To leave; I think I'd like to stay down here,
For Petersburg is just next door to Heaven in the spring.
Well, "so long!" folks, we'll meet again next year!

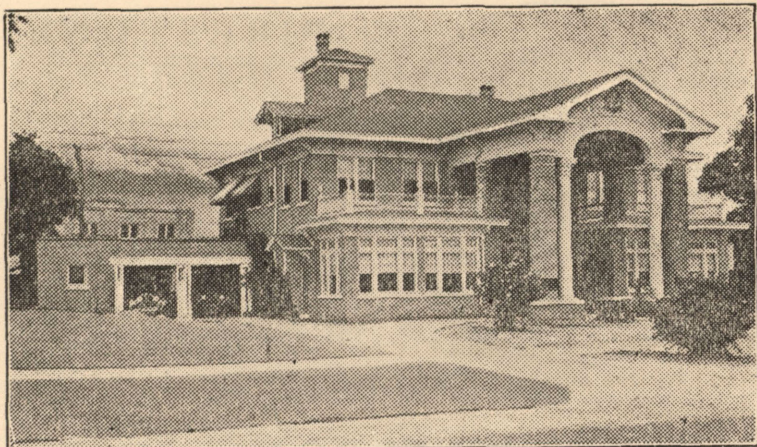
FINIS

If you want to do kindness, to the friend you love the best,
Just tell him that you know its time for him to take a rest,
And have him plan to bring his wife and family, one and all,
And come along to St. Petersburg with you next fall.

Just tell about the jolly times you've had this year,
And he'll be glad to listen to your story, never fear;
He can't forget the cold and mud, and rain and sleet and snow,
He struggled with while you had flowers and sunshine here, you know.

And don't forget to tell him there is always lots of fun,
And room, and friendly benches in the park for every one;
But you must not get restless now and hurry home too soon,
We'll have a lot of good times yet, you'd better stay 'till June.

And hurry back before it's cold, bring all your kith and kin;
Just tell us when, we'll open wide the doors and let you in;
And with this bit of good advice, my jingles I must end—
Be sure you bring your friend, and his best friend, and that friend's friend!



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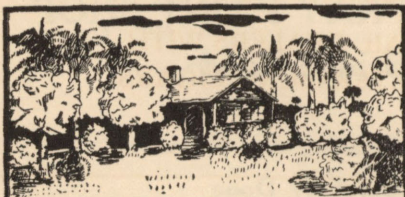
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